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ABSTRACT

The IDEA Oral Language Proficiency Test (IPT-I), forms C and D, aims to determine the level of English oral language proficiency as it relates to accepted levels of NonEnglish speaking (NES), limited English speaking (LES), and fluent English speaking (FES) designations in order to place students in an appropriate classroom setting. The test was designed for students in kindergarten through grade 6. The sample of test takers for standardization ranged from age 5 to age 12. The C and D forms are parallel tests that measure the correctness, appropriateness, and completeness of items through syntax, morphological structure, lexical content, and phonological structure. Students are tested individually by an examiner who should be bilingual in English and the native language of the student. Test materials are of good quality and are easy to use, and the test is simple to administer and score. Thirty-three school districts have participated in field tests, and reliability and validity have been supported by the field tests. The major weakness of the test is the difficulty of interpreting tables in the test manual. (Contains 3 references.) (SLD)

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A Review of the IDEA Oral Language Proficiency Test Forms C & D-English

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Title: IDEA Oral Language Proficiency Test Forms C & D • English
IPT I Oral Grades K-6
Authors: Wanda S. Ballard, Enrique F. Dalton & Phyllis L. Tighe
Publisher: Ballard and Tighe, a division of Educational IDEAS, Inc.
Date of publication: 1991
Date of most recent norming sample: Spring, 1990
Time required to administer: Approximately 14 minutes
:Selected costs (as of 11/21/94):

*Complete set including 50 answer sheets, Technical Manual, Examiner's Manual, Test Pictures, and Group List and Test Level Summary = $99 for each of sets for form C and D.
Additional packs of 50 answer sheets = $27 for C or D
*Additional Test Pictures = $43 for C or D
*Examiner's Manual = $14.50 for C or D
*Technical Manual = $21.50
*Level Summary for C and D = $7.50
*Group List for C and D = $4.00

Brief Description of Purpose and Nature of Test

The purpose of this instrument is to determine the level of English oral language proficiency as it relates to accepted levels of Non English Speaking (NES), Limited English Speaking (LES), and Fluent English Speaking (FES) designations in order to place students in an appropriate classroom setting. The test was designed for students in grades Kindergarten through sixth. The sample of the test takers in the standardization ranged in age from five to twelve years of age.

The IPT - English, Forms C and D are parallel form tests and measure the correctness, appropriateness and completeness of items through four objectives; syntax, morphological structure, lexical, and phonololgical structure. The test consists of items which require the student to respond to oral questions and stimuli and questions about pictures. The entire test is given orally in English. Students are tested individually by a trained examiner who should be bilingual in English and the native language of the student in a quiet and undestracting atmosphere. The examiner should also have a brief discussion with the examinee in order to develop

rapport and describe the purpose of the test prior to the administration. There are six levels of difficulty tested: Levels A, B, C, D, E and F. Students begin at the easiest level of the test according to their grade level and progress on until they either finish the test or make enough errors to qualify them at a lower level. There is no Level A section of the test, it is a placement designation only. Students receive one score on the test according to the level of difficulty at which they finish the test. The number of errors for each level of difficulty are:

Level B:	7 or more errors: Stop. Score is Level A. 3-6 errors: Stop. Score is Level B. 2 or less errors: Go to level C.
Level C:	9 or more errors: Stop. Score is Level B. 4-8 errors: Stop. Score is Level C. 3 or less errors: Go to Level D.
Level D:	9 or more errors: Stop. Score is Level C. 4-8 errors: Stop. Score Level is D. 3 or less errors: Go to Level E.
Level E:	10 or more errors: Stop. Score is Level D. 4-9 errors: Stop. Score is Level E. 3 or less errors: Go to Level F.
Level F:	7 or more errors: Score is Level E. 6 or less errors: Score Level is F.

Once the student has finished the test, the administrator assigns an English oral language fluency designation of NES, LES or FES according to the score and grade level of the student.

Practical Evaluation

The test materials are of good quality and are easy to use. The Technical and Examiner's Manuals are arranged in good sequential format and the terms and directions are simple to understand. The authors took into account questions or problems that could come up in the administering and scoring of the tests and provide ample solutions and answers in the Examiner's Manual. The Picture Book is also of good quality, stands upright and allows for the examiner to flip the pages

easily. The pictures are in bright colors and have good face validity. However, several of the pictures are culturally biased in the reviewer's opinion. The provision of the Level Summaries are particularly noteworthy. These allow for the examinee's level to be used as a diagnostic tool for the regular classroom teacher, giving examples of what the student can and cannot do at each level.

The test is simple to administer and score. Scoring is done by hand. However, it is suggested that the examiner should go through training on the administration and scoring of the test from a representative of the publishing company. Likewise, the examiner should be thoroughly familiar with the test and have the materials prepared prior to administration. The answer sheets are easy to follow and have clear instructions. The questions are culturally unbiased except in the case of some of those pertaining to the pictures. Only the administrator uses the answer sheet while the child responds to questions without looking at anything except for pictures when the Picture Book is used. The answer sheets, the Level Summary sheets and the Group Lists are consumable and require additional purchases.

Technical Evaluation

Thirty three school districts throughout Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New Mexico, Texas and Wisconsin participated in the field tests for information. Emphasis was placed on selecting a large sample. Only certified teachers were selected to administer the IPT I-English, Forms C and D. Many were bilingual and bicultural teachers with experience in teaching bilingual and ESL classes. Care was taken to select administrators who related well with students. Many selected examiners went through a six-hour training session with one of the authors of the exam. During the session, she explained the field-testing protocols and demonstrated the administration and scoring of the test. Then she had the examiners review and practice the process individually. Those who did not go through the

training received the same testing and scoring information in written form. Emphasis was placed on standardization and scoring in order to lesson the possibility of examiner error and data contamination.

Approximately the same percentage of male and female students were field-tested on forms C & D. The sample ranged from ages five through twelve. Each age group was somewhat equal in percentage with age twelve having the lowest percentage of participation on each form. Students of Hispanic and English ethnicity represented the majority of the norming sample while students of Korean, Chinese, Japanese and Southeast Asian ethnicity were also represented. Students from grades K through 6th were included in the norming sample. The percentage of students at each grade level was similar except for the sixth grade which represented 9.9 and 10.7 % on forms C & D respectively, with the average being about 14.5%. Approximately 85% of the students tested had been identified as either Limited or Fluent English Speaking.

Reliability of the different forms of the test was measured by using inter-item analysis, split-half, and test/retest and inter-rater approaches. Inter-item analysis showed a reliability coefficient of .99 for both forms based on an N of 433 and 389 for forms C and D respectively. The split-half reliability to determine the degree of internal consistency had a Spearman-Brown corrected coefficient of .85 for form C and .87 for form D. The Guttman Split-Half was .82 and .82 respectively. Test/retest reliability showed a Pearson's r of .93 for form C and a Pearson's r of .87 for form D. Some time passed between the two administrations to lesson the possibility of contamination due to additional learning, recall and retention of knowledge of test items.

Validity of the IPT I was determined through content, criterion-related and construct validity approaches. The parallel forms of the test show good content validity based on the number of items representing each of the six objectives of the

test. Criterion-related validity was based on teacher prediction, teacher opinion, and district designation. Both teacher prediction and district designation showed high correlations in the .70 range for the two forms while teacher opinion showed a lower correlation of .36 to .37. Relatively high positive correlations were obtained between the two forms from students in the sample who were of the same age, at the same grade level, and who were monolingual English speakers.

Reviewer Comments

Stansfield (1991) reviewed the revised forms of the IPT I, C & D., and has cited several strengths of the new forms. The first is that the test was developed by practicing teachers with many years of classroom experience. He also found the test easy to administer and score and that the system of score conversion from raw scores to proficiency classifications was sound. He found the test to have adequate content validity and strong reliability due in part to its length, the similarity between the two forms, and the relative ease with which it can be scored. However, he found weaknesses in the Technical Manual. His critique cites problems in the clarity of the research, inadequate explanations of the various tables, and difficulty for the administrator to understand the test's validity and reliability.

Summary Evaluation

In this examiner's opinion, one of the major strengths of the test is its ease of administration. The directions can be followed easily and the scoring procedures are amply explained. Although the authors suggest that only those trained to give the test should do so, anyone who can speak the native language of the child being tested and who has familiarized themselves with the test could do the administration. Another strength is the relatively short amount of time the administration of the test takes, on average fourteen minutes.

Another strength is the validity and reliability of both forms. The technical manual shows extensive data to support this. Likewise, having given the test before,

I have seen its validity and reliability in actual practices. Student outcomes appeared to be reliably and validly represented. The face validity of the test is particularly good. It is appealing and students have responded well to it. The questions probed simulate authentic conversation and oral language.

The major weakness of the test is the Test Manual. Although the reliability and validity measures appear to be supportive, interpreting the tables is difficult. Those examining the Test Manual for purchasing purposes and those administering the test may need to get help to understand the technical information presented. However, the authors do make an attempt to explain the reasoning behind each of the validity and reliability measures. What is lacking is how the measurements were obtained.

Given the purpose of the test and the ease and cost of administration, this reviewer would recommend it. There are several English oral language proficiency test on the market, however, in my experience, this is the best I have seen . The authors express a desire to receive comments about the test from its users. I would suggest to them that they reexamine the pictures in the Picture Book because some of the pictures appear to be culturally biased. Also, I would suggest a more user friendly explanation of the validity and reliability studies.

References

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